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Midnight Tea Party



Rosy folded her blue nightgown and put it in the little pink suitcase. She could hardly wait to go to Grandmother's house tonight! Grandmother had asked each of the girl cousins to take a turn sleeping overnight at her house this summer, and then to stay and help with the cleaning the next day. The older cousins had each had a turn, but Rosy had been afraid Grandmother would think she was too young.

But no! Grandmother had said, "Sure, Rosy can come. After all, she's ready to go into third grade. That's plenty big enough to help me!" She had given Rosy her special smile, and Rosy had smiled back. She liked her grandmother.

She also liked Grandmother's house. She liked Grandmother's large bedroom with the pretty

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peach-colored curtains at the windows. She liked the kitchen with its yellow sunflower curtains. Rosy liked the white spigot at Grandmother's sink; she could pull it out and spray the sink. She liked Grandmother's snack cupboard; when Rosy pushed the door in, the shelves whirled in a circle, and she could see marshmallows and chocolate chips and cookies and other treats.

Grandmother even kept bananas in her snack cupboard because she liked black bananas. That seemed odd to Rosy. She hated black bananas! But Grandmother never made anyone else eat black bananas, so it was all right that she kept them in her snack cupboard. Rosy wondered what treat would be hiding in Grandmother's snack cupboard tonight.

Rosy finished packing her clothes in the suitcase and snapped it shut. She put her purple toothbrush in the side pocket and zipped it. She carried her suitcase to the kitchen where Mother was finishing the dishes. "I'm all ready to go!" she announced. "When can we leave?"

Mother smiled at Rosy. "In a minute. I'm almost finished here. You may put your suitcase in the van."

When Rosy stepped out the door, her kitten Oreo dashed over and mewed. Rosy reached down and rubbed Oreo with her free hand. "You be good while I'm at Grandmother's," she instructed.

Mother came out the door with the van keys. "You aren't planning to take Oreo along to Grandmother's house, are you?" she teased. "You know Grandmother doesn't like cats."

“I know,” Rosy said with a laugh. “But, Mother, will you remember to feed Oreo tomorrow morning?”

“I’ll make sure the twins fill her bowl,” Mother promised.

The twins were only two and a half years old; Rosy hoped they would be careful with her kitten. One time they had fought over Oreo. Davy had hold of her tail and Daisy had her head. Poor Oreo had mewed so piteously that Rosy had been afraid she wouldn’t live.

“What if the twins aren’t kind to Oreo?” she asked as she climbed into the van and set her suitcase on the floor beside her.

Mother backed the van out of the driveway and headed down the road. “Don’t worry. I’ll keep my eye on them. I punished them the last time they fought over Oreo, and I think they’re doing better, aren’t they?”

Rosy nodded. Then she thought of something else. “Mother! You won’t let Eddy tease Oreo while I’m away, will you?” Rosy’s twelve-year-old brother liked to tease. One time Rosy had been hunting for Oreo. She finally heard her mewing and found her in one of Daddy’s big boots. Eddy said he had put her in the boot to surprise Rosy.

“We’ll take care of Eddy,” Mother said. “Don’t worry about Oreo. Just enjoy your stay with Grandmother.”

Rosy smiled. She was sure she would enjoy her stay. When they arrived at Grandmother’s, Rosy grabbed her suitcase and jumped out.

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“Sleep well!” Mother called after her.

“I will! Bye!” Rosy said with a giggle. She dashed into Grandmother’s house.

Grandmother and Rosy played two games of checkers. Then they read stories before getting ready for bed. It was strange to crawl into the small cot near Grandmother’s bed instead of the double bed at home that she shared with her little sister Daisy.

Rosy wondered if Daisy missed her. She would not be there to tell Daisy a good-night story. She thought of her baby sister Ashley. She always liked to give Ashley a good-night hug and kiss. She thought of Mother, and suddenly Rosy felt lonesome for her family. She had looked forward to coming to Grandmother’s house. She hadn’t expected to feel lonely.

Rosy looked around the dark bedroom. The light on the clock showed 11:15. Usually she was sleeping long before this. She turned on her other side and tried to go to sleep. Then she tried to hold still so she wouldn’t disturb Grandmother, but she couldn’t get comfortable.

Finally Grandmother said, “Can’t you go to sleep?”

“No,” Rosy whispered.

“Well!” Grandmother exclaimed. “I can’t go to sleep either! Let’s go out to the kitchen and make tea.”

Rosy was astonished. Mother never made tea at 11:30 at night! She climbed out of bed. “Shall I help you so you don’t trip?” she asked Grandmother.

“Yes, please do.”

Rosy held Grandmother's hand as they walked through the living room into the kitchen. She flipped on the light switch and watched while Grandmother put the teakettle on to boil.

"What kind of tea do you like?" Grandmother wondered. "Here," she said, handing the basket of tea packets to Rosy. "Pick whatever kind you want."

Rosy looked at all the different kinds of tea: peppermint, chamomile, lemon, raspberry, and orange. "I think orange would be good," Rosy decided at last.

Grandmother smiled. "That's my favorite too. Let's have the same kind. And what shall we eat with our tea? You may choose something out of the snack cupboard."

Rosy pushed open the snack door and watched the marshmallows and chocolate chips and cookies go past. Ah, there went the black bananas; she wouldn't choose them, for sure. *Mmm*—party mix! "Could we have party mix?" Rosy asked.

"Why not?" Grandmother said. "We're all alone. We can have whatever we want!"

"Good," Rosy said. "I like party mix."

They sipped their tea and crunched on party mix and told stories. "I like having tea in the middle of the night," Rosy said. "It's cozy."

Grandmother nodded. "It's nice to have you here to have tea with me. Usually I can't sleep very well, but I need to lie real still because the other cousins fall asleep right away!" Grandmother winked at Rosy. "They can just

A Basket of Petunias



“**B**ring the Jell-O from the refrigerator, Rosy, and check if it has set enough to cut,” Mother instructed. Rosy pulled out the pan of Jell-O and lightly touched the top.

Earlier this morning, Rosy had helped Mother to make the finger Jell-O. She measured $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups of orange gelatin and 3 tablespoons of plain gelatin into the big metal bowl. Mother dumped in 2 cups of boiling water, and Rosy stirred until the gelatin was all dissolved. Then she added 2 cups of cold water, 1 quart of vanilla yogurt, and 1 quart of applesauce.

When Rosy stirred the mixture, a little had splashed over the edge of the bowl and she had slurped it up. “Yum!” she had exclaimed. “I can’t wait till it’s ready to eat.”